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SENIOR ADVISERS TO ECE GOVERNMENTS
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INVENTORY OF EXISTING SAFETY GUIDELINES IN BIOTECHNOLOGY

MONOGRAPH

Information transmitted by the French Government

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION

1. In France, provisions concerning the regulation of biotechnologies follow the recommendations issued by OECD in 1986. Like all the members of the European Community, France has applied Community directives dealing with this matter, and particularly those adopted in April 1990 relating to the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms and the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms, as well as that relating to the protection of workers.

2. Decisions taken:

(i) Law of 13 July 1993:

This law is intended to regulate research, teaching, development and production in the field of micro-organisms and genetically modified organisms and the placing of these products on the market. It is based on existing structures which it reinforces:

- The Commission on Genetic Engineering, responsible for establishing the criteria used to assess the hazards presented by the products of genetic engineering, evaluating projects and prescribing containment measures;

- The Commission on the Study of the Release of the Products of Biomolecular Engineering, known as the Commission on Biomolecular Engineering, whose task is to make a case-by-case and step-by-step study of research and development operations in non-contained environments, and to give an opinion before products are placed on the market.

(ii) Protection of workers:

A decree will shortly create "a Section VII to Chapter One of Book II, Title II, of the Labour Code", entitled "Prevention of Biological Hazards".

(iii) Issue by AFNOR (Association Française de Normalisation) of a series of French standards, to be updated regularly, covering sound research and production practices in the field of biotechnologies, and particularly genetic engineering.

3. In liaison with the professionals involved and in the context of the European Community's "new approach" to the regulation of industry, France has initiated a process under which Community standards will be proposed.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS TRANSMITTED TO THE SECRETARIAT AND AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION UPON REQUEST

None.